Early Learning and Early Elementary Vocabulary Crosswalk

Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
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Introduction

The demand for Early Childhood Education (ECE) is increasing as awareness grows about the positive effect of early intervention on students' school and life success. Considering President Obama's plans for national preschool expansion, the link between ECE and K-12 needs greater attention and examination. K-12 and ECE teachers acknowledge how their roles all play a part in achieving the goal of student success, but practitioners are often less aware of differences between the two systems and how they each use words differently to explain their work. The goal of this vocabulary crosswalk project is to examine how Early Childhood and K-12 teachers describe their practice and ultimately build connections between the two systems. The project is designed to see if teachers are using different words to describe the same ideas, using the same word to describe different ideas, or using the same words in the same way. The crosswalk also considers whether philosophical or pedagogical approaches are responsible for differences in how terminology is used or perceived in the two systems.

Method

The sources of information for this crosswalk included: teacher interviews, surveys, online articles, and conversations with experts in both K-12 and Early Childhood Education. To discover the language crossover and still consider the deeper philosophical dynamics, the bulk of the data gathered for this project was from teacher interviews, which were designed to understand how teachers think about and explain their work. We asked for their reactions to buzzwords like rigor, developmentally appropriate practice, student growth, academic, and play. These words were chosen to represent common words used in each setting. We interviewed 40 teachers including 15 video recorded sessions. Videos were taken at two K-12 schools and one Early Childhood center. 15 responses were collected from Chicago Public Schools Early Childhood Educators.

This information led to three products: a glossary which shows relationships between words and describes different aspects of ECE and K-12, one-pagers which highlight findings from surveys and teacher interviews, and a PowerPoint presentation which includes both videos and information from the one-pagers. The glossary has two parts. The first part shows one-to-one connections between words. For example, social emotional development = character education. The second part of the glossary describes differences and similarities in the systems, specifically looking at learning standards and practices in the field.

Key Findings

We found ECE and K-12 teachers understand buzzwords and concepts from each other's setting, but as we suspected, often describe their work differently. In other instances, teachers described their work similarly.

Rigor

When thinking about rigor, both ECE and K-12 teachers described a level of difficulty, using words like "hard" and "tough". K-12 teachers associate rigorous instruction with evaluation and testing and a need to push students to the next level. When explaining rigor, a K-12 teacher said that it is "ensuring that work is challenging enough to push students to grow." ECE teachers noted school readiness and high levels of engagement. An ECE teacher said that rigor is "any activity that causes children to think outside of the box."

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Another example is when teachers talked about developmentally appropriate practice, a clear buzzword in Early Childhood Education. While developmentally appropriate practice is a phrase not necessarily used in K-12, many teachers explained this familiar "ECE" concept with different words. An example is when a K-12 teacher said, "developmentally appropriate practice is differentiating for each one of my students." ECE teachers discussed knowing the "developmental trajectories and widely held expectations for each age range" and seeking "to support students as they develop along those pathways".

Student Growth

One of the key take-aways was ECE teachers often talk about "development" to describe their students' growth and learning standards. Many K-12 teachers describe growth in terms of academic achievement as measured by test scores. K-12 teachers also described how growth looks aside from standardized measures. One K-12 teacher said that she knew her students grew when they could "question everything" and learned critical thinking skills. A survey response from a K-12 teacher highlighted the deeper tension sometimes present in the systems: "ECE has at times been reluctant to talk about the concrete outcomes we want to see in children that will indicate they are getting the foundation they need to be successful in formal schooling. In K-12, we are not talking nearly enough about character development, citizenship, social-emotional development or developmentally appropriate practice".

Academic

Some buzzwords had more alignment in terms of common understanding and use of similar language. When talking about the term *academic*, a K-12 buzzword, ECE teachers and K-12 teachers both described core subjects such as math, reading, and writing. One ECE teacher describes how her view of academics is broader than the core subjects. "At the early stages of development, everything is academic, everything is learning. There is nothing that they do that they are not learning something. Its all experiences."

Play

Other interesting findings were conversations around play. K-12 teachers described play as project-based learning, science, kinesthetic, games, and puzzles. K-12 teachers talked about how play is similar to group work and collaboration. The use of play was strikingly different as many teachers in K-12 describe how play is often used as a reward, whereas ECE teachers identify play as central to their children's learning. One ECE educator said, "play is every child's right."

Next Steps

These findings can serve as a framework for future conversations across education sectors but depth can be added in a number of different ways. First, it would be helpful to conduct more teacher interviews and gather more survey responses to diversify and expand the crosswalk. Specifically, video interviewing more ECE teachers and talking to teachers in different schools and regions of the state would add to this project. Focus groups could also be helpful to examine the information differently, looking at group agreement or disagreement around perceptions and definitions. A deeper dive into words used in publications and printed materials would supplement findings from this project as well. Midway through the project, the similarity between play and project-based learning became evident and it would be interesting to further investigate these words through interviews and surveys. Additionally, more research could look at the similarities between character education and social-emotional development. We also found that three of the ECE teachers we interviewed described a definition similar to the word, “rigid” when asked about “rigor” and talked about how rigor is not flexible. It would be interesting to talk to more ECE teachers to see if this is a common perception in the ECE field or was unique to the specific teachers we interviewed. When talking about student growth, ECE teachers more often described a process and focused less on the end result. The idea of holding a standard bar where all students “master” grade-level skills was a relatable concept for K-12 educators, but ECE teachers found this concept less familiar and often described expectations for their students through a lens of consideration and respect for children’s individual developmental process.

Vocabulary Crosswalk

Relationships between words

Workforce and structural components

ECE Term	K-12
Center Based Organization (CBO) Program Provider	School
Child, student, learner	Student, scholar
Lead Teacher Assistant Teacher Educator Practitioner	Teacher
Director	Principal
Assistant Director	Assistant Principal
Early Care and Education Practitioners	Public School Educators
Paraprofessionals	Non-certified staff

Common Phrases

ECE Term	K-12
Social Emotional Development	Character Education Citizen Counts
Intentional	Standards-driven
Developmental Learning Standards	Academic Learning Standards
Play	Project-based Kinesthetic Hands-on Teamwork

Vocabulary Crosswalk
Glossary

Early Childhood Education Systems and Terms	K-12 Systems and Terms
Program/School Assessment	
Quality Ratings and Improvement System (QRIS) **Also known as: ExceleRate Illinois** Quality Ratings Improvement System Website (INCCRRA) QRIS outlines standards for childcare centers, Preschool for All programs, Head Start programs, and licensed family childcare homes. Programs are rated according to factors like group size, child ratios, staff qualifications, and staff development. Each state engineers its own QRIS guidelines. Illinois' QRIS is called ExceleRate Illinois. **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)** CLASS website The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observational tool used in preschool classrooms across the country to give a common lens and language on classroom interactions. The CLASS often provides teachers with information used for professional development.	**Danielson Framework** Danielson Framework Website The Danielson Framework for Teaching is a proposed model for evaluating teachers in Illinois. The framework is grounded in a constructivist view of learning and teaching. It includes four domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. **The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)** PARCC website PARCC is a consortium of 19 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math focusing on college and career readiness skills. The goal of these assessments is to mark students' progress toward college readiness from 3rd grade up and provide teachers with information to inform instruction and provide student support. The PARCC assessment will be ready for states to administer during the 2014-15 school year.

Points of Connection

Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS)
KIDS website

The Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) is an observational formative assessment administered by Kindergarten teachers. Teachers collect anecdotal evidence throughout rating periods to consider progress on multiple developmental domains. The assessment is used to determine whether Illinois students have the skills and knowledge to succeed in Kindergarten.

Interim Assessment

An interim assessment is designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction. (ISBE)

Balanced Assessment

A balanced assessment system is the strategic use of formative, interim, and summative measures of

student performance to address immediate student needs, inform ongoing instructional changes, and guide long-term educational improvement. (ISBE)

Student Learning Objectives (SLO)

A Student Learning objective is a detailed process used to organize evidence of student growth over a specified period of time. (ISBE)

Anecdotal Observations
Gateways Glossary Definition

Directly observed occurrences that are clearly and concisely written in a nonjudgmental manner in the past tense, including a factual account of a single incident answering the who, what, where, when, and how of the incident.

Learning Standards

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
NAEYC website; Gateways Glossary Definition

NAEYC is an accrediting body that determines standards for early care providers. NAEYC provides guidance on how to support the wellbeing of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for children from birth through age 8.

Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS) *Formerly known as the Illinois Early Learning Standards*
IELDS Website

The Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS) provide reasonable expectations for children's growth, development, and learning in the preschool years.

Common Core
Common Core Standards Website
Illinois Common Core Website

The Common Core State Standards are a national set of learning standards for Kindergarten through 12th grade. The standards describe what students are expected to know at each grade-level. Illinois State Board of Education crafted new math and English/ language arts standards using the Common Core, known as the New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core.

Illinois Learning Standards (ILS)
ILS Website

ILS define the skills and knowledge that students in Illinois public schools should have as a result of elementary and secondary schooling.

Points of Connection

Illinois Educators' Code of Ethics
Illinois Educator's Code of Ethics Website

Illinois Educators' Code of Ethics is a set of core principles, values, and responsibilities that sets expectations to guide practice and professional excellence in relation to federal, state, and local policies, rules, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements. The 5 core principles of the Code of Ethics are: responsibility to students, responsibility to self, responsibility to colleagues and the profession, responsibility to parents, families and communities, and responsibility to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Certifications

Type 04 (Early Childhood) Teacher Certification
Type 04 Certification

The Type 04 Certification is issued by Illinois State Board of Education to teach birth through age 8 children in Illinois classrooms. Type 04 certification is needed for anyone who wants to teach young children in Illinois public schools and Preschool for All classrooms.

Child Development Associate (CDA)
CDA website

The CDA is an entry-level national credential awarded to infant/toddler and early childhood development practitioners by the National Council for Early Child Professional Recognition. Those with a CDA credential obtain a minimum of ten hours of training in each of the designated eight content areas and meet other portfolio and credential requirements.

Points of Connection

Type 75 Principal Certification
Type 75 Certification Website

The Type 75 is an advanced administrative certificate required in the state of Illinois to certain administrative K-12 positions. There are four endorsements to this certificate each with its on requisites for eligibility, state approved programs, standards and clinical experience. They are the Superintendent, Principal, Director of Special Education and Chief School Business Official. This certification includes coursework in Early Childhood Development.

Practices in the field

Developmental Appropriate Practice
Developmentally Appropriate Practice Website

Developmentally appropriate practice, often shortened to DAP, is an approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn. DAP's framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development through effective strategies. DAP involves teachers meeting young children where they are (by stage of development) and helping each child meet challenging and achievable learning goals. Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice are shaped by NAEYC.

Character Education
Character Education Website

Character education includes and complements a broad range of educational approaches such as whole child education, service learning, social-emotional learning, and civic education. All share a commitment to helping young people become responsible, caring, and contributing citizens.

Home-visiting
The Case for Home Visiting

Voluntary, home-based programs that match parents with trained professionals to provide information and support during pregnancy and throughout their child's first three years. Home visitors partner with expectant moms to encourage them to make regular prenatal care visits, quit smoking and drinking, and to eat a balanced diet- all behaviors that dramatically decrease their chances of having a low birth weight or substance exposed baby. Home visiting also helps parents find healthy solutions to stressful circumstances by connecting them with safe and stable housing and counseling for substance abuse or depression, as well as by teaching them to build positive, loving relationships with their children.

Project-based Learning (PBL)

Project Based Learning Website

In Project Based Learning (PBL), students go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem, or challenge. PBL allows student "voice and choice," as rigorous projects are carefully planned, managed, and assessed to help students learn key academic content, practice 21st Century Skills (such as collaboration, communication & critical thinking), and create high-quality, authentic products & presentations.

Bloom's Taxonomy
Bloom's Taxonomy Website

Bloom's Taxonomy is a classification system used to define and distinguish different levels of human cognition- i.e., thinking, learning, and understanding. Educators have typically used Bloom's taxonomy to inform or guide the development of assessments (tests and other evaluations of student learning), curriculum (units, lessons, projects, and other learning activities), and instructional methods such as questioning strategies.

Points of Connection

Constructivist Learning
Cal State Curriculum Website

Constructivist learning is based on students' active participation in problem-solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity. Students "construct" knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, applying these to a new situation, and integrating the new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs.

Evidence-based (or research based)
Evidence-Based Website

Educational practices based on research that supports their effectiveness.

Funding Mechanisms	
Preschool for All (PFA) Chicago Public Schools Website Preschool for All is a funding stream which supports a minimum of 2 hours and forty minutes of preschool programming for three- and four-year-olds. Most programs with PFA programs are administered through the public school system. **Head Start (HS)** Head Start Website Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children age's birth to five from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Head Start programs provide comprehensive services to enrolled children and their families, which include health, nutrition, social, and other services determined to be necessary by family needs assessments, in addition to education and cognitive development services. **Early Head Start** Early Head Start Website Early Head Start provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families, and pregnant women and their families. **Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP)** Gateways Glossary Definition The Childcare Assistance Program is administered through the Illinois Department of Human Services. The program pays childcare providers in order to defray the cost of childcare. Parents participating in the CCAP qualify based on family size, income and number of children in care. All participating families must pay a co-payment toward the cost of their care.	**General Fund administered by Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)** ISBE General Funding Website ISBE allocates state General Fund monies to local school districts only after the General Assembly and Governor approve the K-12 portion of the state budget. The majority of those funds are funneled to local districts. **Federal Funding Award Race to the Top (RttT)** Race to the Top Website Race to the Top (RttT) is a federal competitive grants program that aims to accelerate key education reforms in states and districts and create the conditions for greater educational innovation and close persistent achievement gaps while increasing student achievement. Illinois was awarded a $42.8 million phase three Race to the Top grant in December 2011 after being a finalist in the competition's first two rounds.

Federal Funding Award
Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTT-ELC)
Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Website

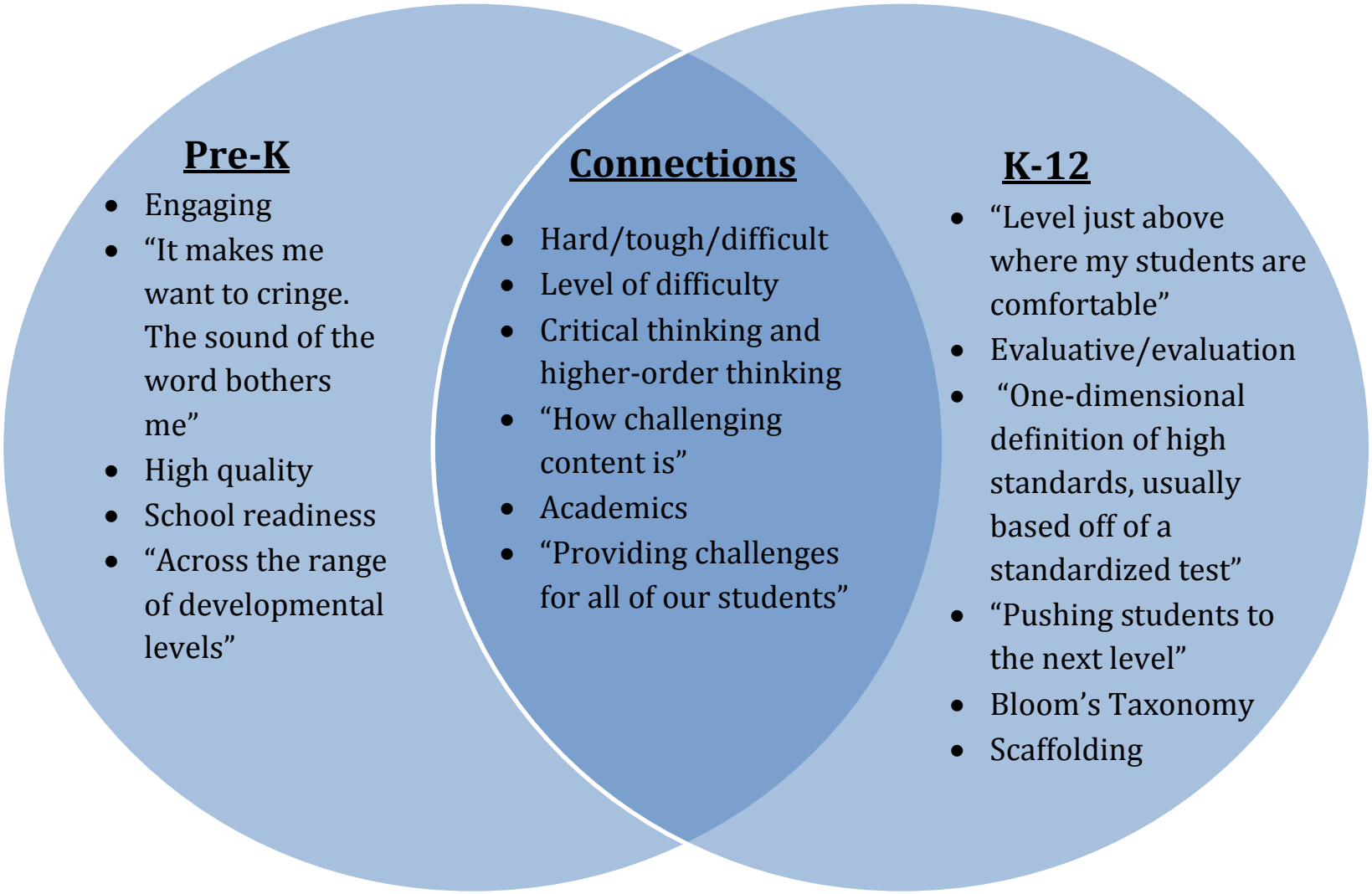
The RTT-ELC grant supports States' efforts to improve early learning and development programs for young children by increasing the number and percentage of low-income and disadvantaged children in each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in high-quality early learning programs; designing and implementing an integrated system of high-quality early learning programs and services; and ensuring that any use of assessments conforms with the recommendations of the National Research Council's reports on early childhood. Illinois was awarded $34 million in phase two of RTT-ELC competition and $17 million in supplemental funding, for a total of $52 million.

Prevention Initiative (PI)
Prevention Initiative Website
PI programs provide child development and family support services for expecting parents and families with children age's birth to three. They utilize a variety of delivery methods including home visiting, parent training, and parent child interaction groups.

Points of Connection

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
ISBE Website

The Illinois State Board of Education provides leadership, assistance, resources and advocacy so that every student is prepared to succeed beyond their PreK-12 education. ISBE shares accountability with districts and schools to prepare students for academic success.



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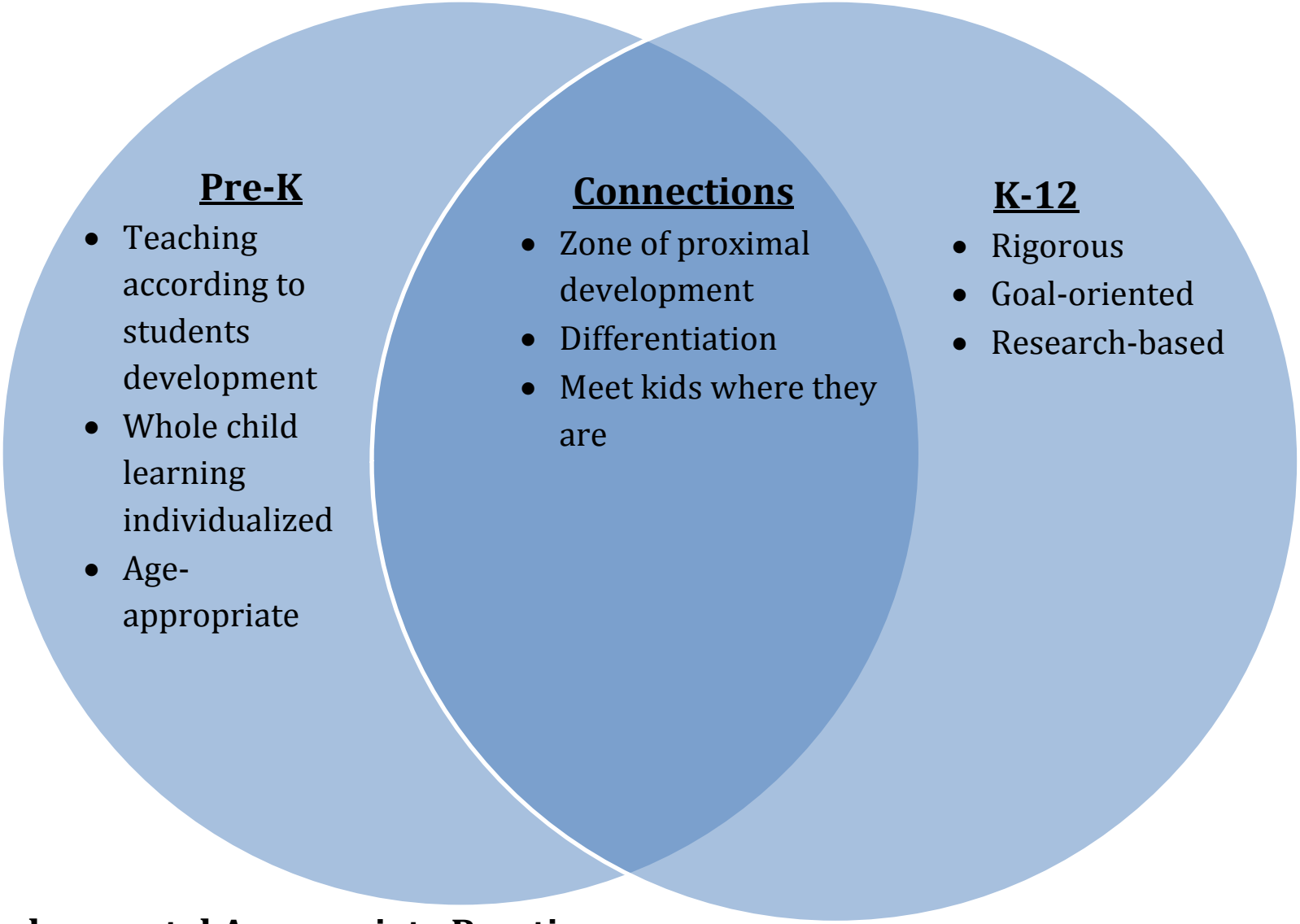

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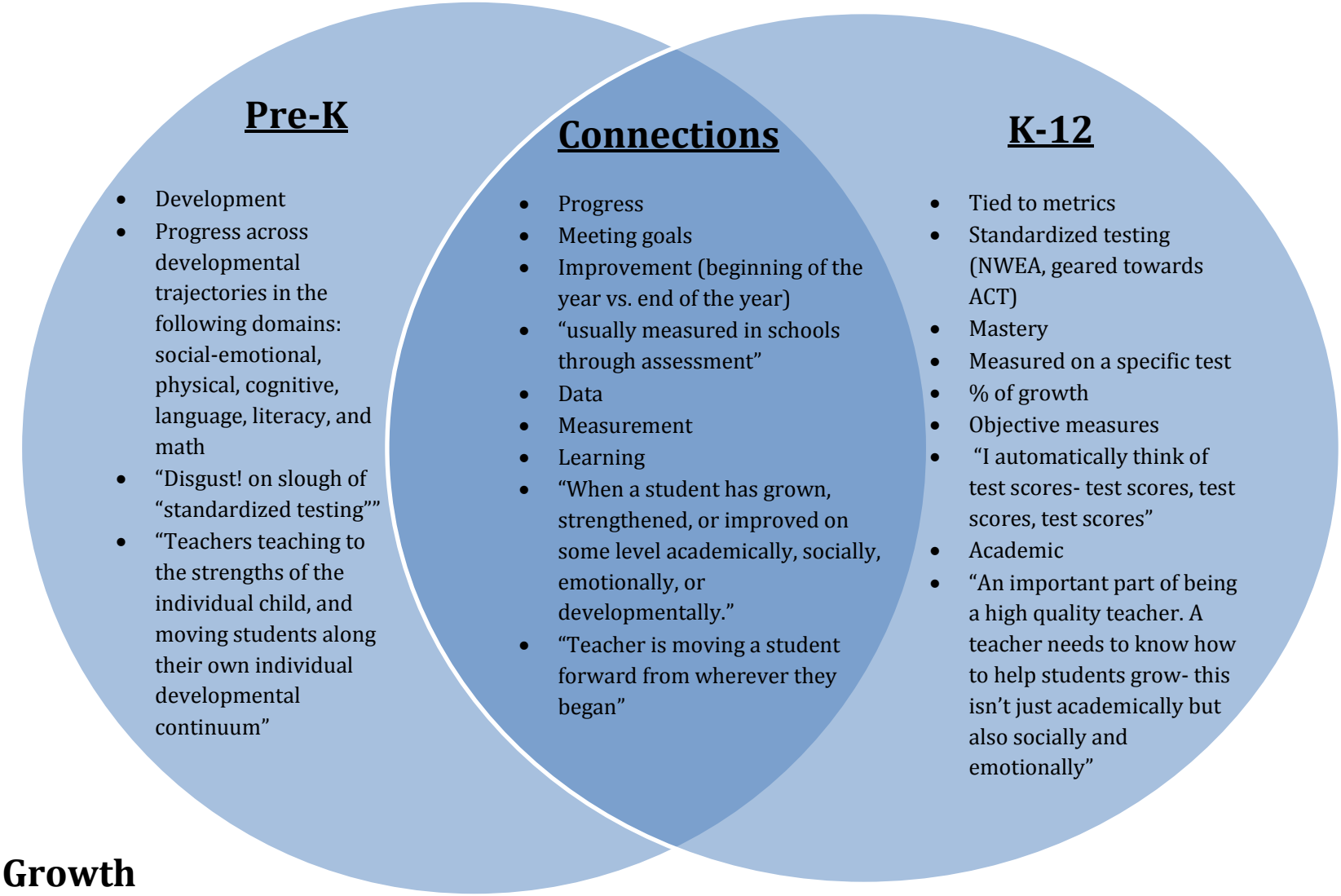

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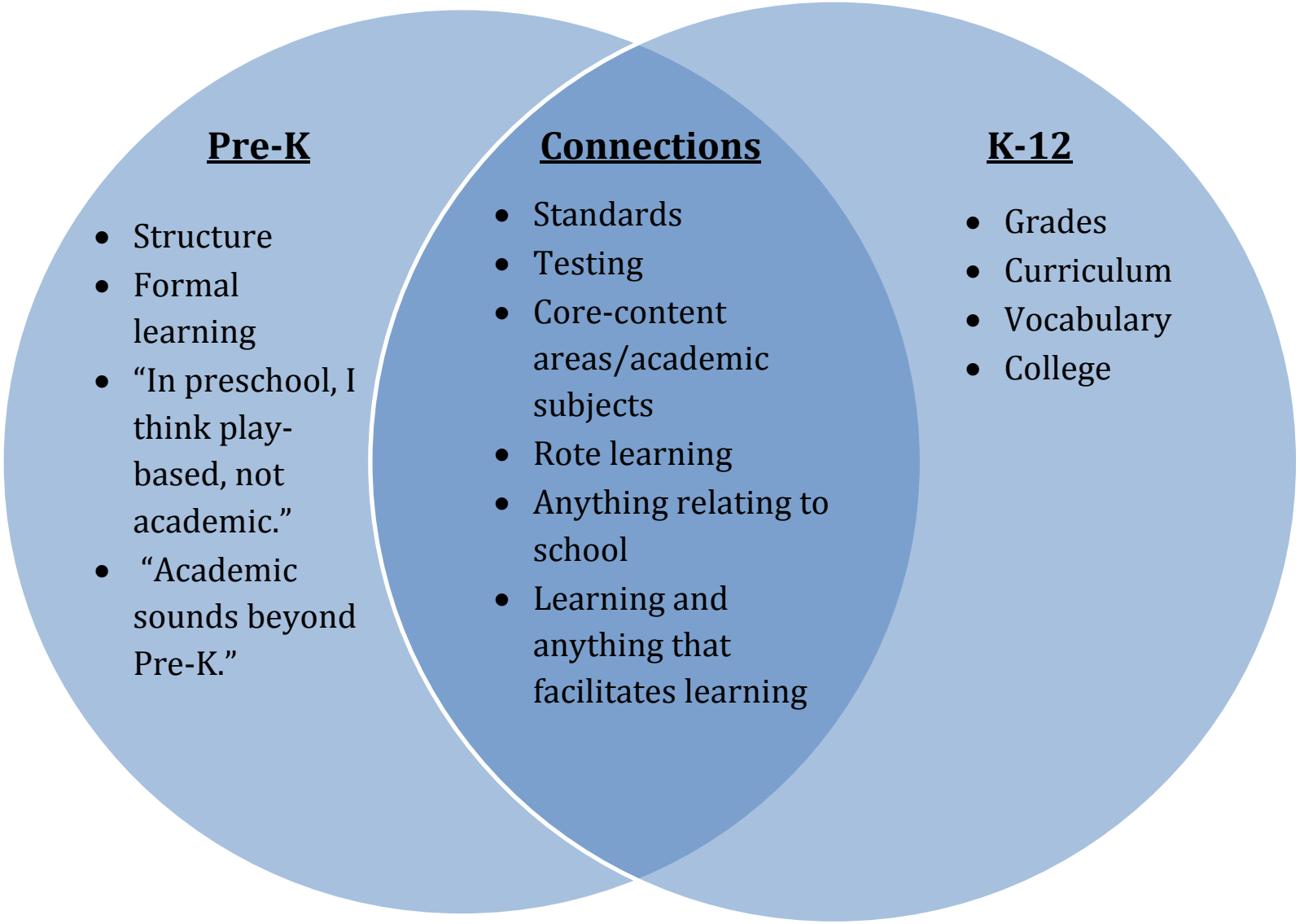

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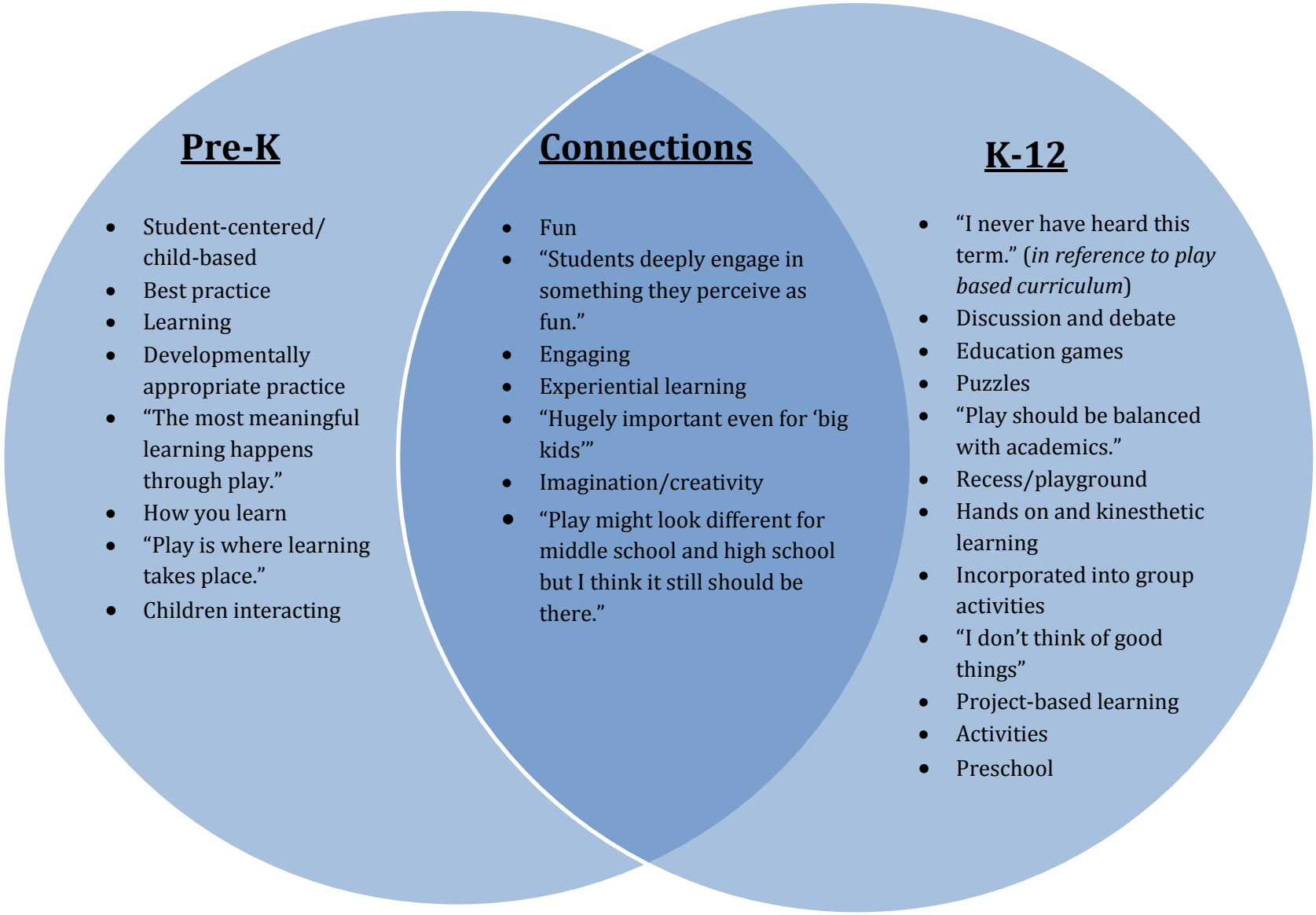

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